

*Press Release: March 2, 2012*

## **Winning? ... Or, is gambling a problem?**

*Learning how to get help for problem gambling*

Gambling should never be a problem. The California Gambling Control Commission (Commission) joins the Office of Problem Gambling (OPG) and other partners to bring extra awareness to this very real issue during Problem Gambling Awareness Week (March 4-10, 2012).

The theme this year is "Gambling can affect anyone, anywhere, anytime." Look for increased publicity in the form of posters, radio and TV announcements, and information being made available through the Lottery, local cardrooms and Tribal casinos. The message is being sent to everyone, with special emphasis towards vulnerable populations.

**Approximately 83% of California adults have gambled at least once in their lives; 58% in the past year.**

"Most people play cards, slots, the lottery or go to the races for fun and entertainment," according to Commission Chair, Stephanie Shimazu, "We all need to be aware that it can stop being simple fun for some individuals and their families."

**A study conducted for OPG indicates that 9.5% of adult Californians are at risk for problem gambling.**

California is on the frontline in developing tools for healthcare providers, counselors, law enforcement and others to help problem gamblers and their families. The third annual Problem Gambling Training Summit will be held in San Diego on March 5-6, 2012. Leaders, industry personnel and other professionals will attend workshops and hear speakers on the theme of, "Building a Foundation for Multicultural Problem Gambling Prevention and Treatment Services."

"More than 200 licensed mental health therapists have been trained and participate in a statewide network of providers who can treat gambling addiction," according to OPG Deputy Director, Terri Sue Canale "These providers treated over 1,300 gamblers and their affected family members this past year."

Gamblers can also receive help by phone through a statewide helpline at (800) 426-2537, (1-800-GAMBLER). In addition, there is a self exclusion program for cardrooms in the state. There are also community support groups like Gamblers Anonymous. For more information about these and other programs visit [www.problemgambling.ca.gov](http://www.problemgambling.ca.gov). The California Office of Problem Gambling activities are funded through the Indian Gaming Special Distribution Fund, the Lottery, and cardroom fees.

###